

"THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR"

ALL THE YEAR ROUND

A Weekly Journal

CONDUCTED BY

CHARLES DICKENS

WITH WHICH IS INCORPORATED

"HOUSEHOLD WORDS"

No. 208. NEW SERIES.

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 23, 1872.

PRICE TWOPENCE.

WILLING TO DIE.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "THE ROSE AND THE KEY."

CHAPTER XIX. PISTOLS FOR TWO.

I KNEW nothing of all this. I was not to learn what had passed at that interview till many years later. Laura Grey, on my return, told me nothing. I am sure she was right. There were some things she could not have explained, and the stranger's apparently insane project of marrying penniless me was a secret better in her own keeping than in that of a simple and very self-willed girl.

When I returned there were signs of depression and anxiety in her looks, and her silence and abstraction excited my curiosity. She easily put me off, however. I knew that her spirits sometimes failed her, although she never talked about her troubles; and therefore her dejection was, after all, not very remarkable. We heard nothing more of our guest till next day, when Rebecca Torkill told us that he was again suffering from one of his headaches. The intelligence did not excite all the sympathy she seemed to expect. Shortly after sunset we saw him pass the window of our room, and walk by under the trees.

With an ingrained perversity, the more Laura Grey warned me against this man, the more I became interested in him. She and I were both unusually silent that evening. I think that her thoughts were busy with him; I know that mine were.

"We won't mind opening the window to-night," said Laura.

"I was just thinking how pleasant it would be. Why should we not open it?" I answered.

"Because we should have him here again; and he is not the sort of person

your mamma would like you to make acquaintance with."

I was a little out of humour, but did not persist. I sat in a sullen silence, my eyes looking dreamily through the window.

The early twilight had faded into night by the time the stranger reappeared. I saw him turn the line of his walk near the window; and seeing it shut, pause for a moment. I dare say he was more vexed than I. He made up his mind, however, against a scene. He looked on the ground and over his shoulder, again at the window.

Mr. Marston walked round the corner to the steward's house. The vague shadows and lights of night were abroad by this time.

Candles were in his room; he found Rebecca Torkill there, with a small tankard and a tea-cup, on a salver, awaiting his return.

"La! sir, to think of you doing such another wild thing, and you, only this minute, at death's door, with your head! And how is it now, please, sir?"

"A thousand thanks. My head is as well as my hat. My headache goes as it comes, in a moment. What is this?"

"Some gruel, please, sir, with sugar, white wine, and nutmeg. I thought you might like it."

"Candle, by Jove!" smiled the gentleman, "isn't it?"

"Well, it is; and it's none the worse o' that."

"All the better," exclaimed Mr. Marston, who chose to be on friendly terms with the old lady. "How can I thank you?"

"It's just the best thing in the world to make you sleep, after a headache. You'll take some while it's hot."

"I can't thank you half enough," he said.

"I'll come back, sir, and see you by-and-bye," and the good woman toddled out, leaving him alone with his gruel.

"I must not offend her." He poured some into his cup, tasted it, and laughed quietly. "Sipping candle! Well, this is rather a change for Richard Marston, by Jove! A change every way. Let us make a carouse of it," he said, and threw it out of the window.

Mr. Marston threw on his loose wrapper, and folded his muffler about his throat, replaced his hat, and with his cane in his fingers, was about to walk down to the town of Cardyllion. A word or two spoken, quite unsuspectingly, by Doctor Mervyn that morning, had touched a sensitive nerve, and awakened a very acute anxiety in Mr. Marston's mind. The result was his intended visit, at the fall of night, to the high-street of the quaint little town.

He was on the point of setting out, when Rebecca Torkill returned with a sliced lemon on a plate.

"Some likes a squeeze of a lemon in it," she observed, "and I thought I might as well leave it here."

"It is quite delicious, really," he replied, as Mrs. Torkill peeped into the open flagon.

"Why," said she, in unfeigned admiration, "I'm blest if he's left a drop! Ah! ha! Well, it was good; and I'll have some more for you before you go to bed. But you shouldn't drink it off, all at a pull, like that. You might make yourself ill that way."

"We men like good liquor so well—so well—we—we—what was I saying? Oh! yes, we like our liquor so well, we never know when we have had enough. It's a bad excuse; but let it pass. I'm going out for a little walk, it always sets me up after one of those headaches. Good evening, Mrs. Torkill."

He was thinking plainly of other matters than her, or her candle; and, before she had time to reply, he was out of the door.

It was a sweet, soft night; the moon was up. The walk from Malory to the town is lonely and pretty.

He took the narrow road that approaches Cardyllion in an inland line, parallel to the road that runs by the shore of the estuary. His own echoing footsteps among the moonlit trees was the only sign of life, except the distant barking of a watch-dog,

now and then, that was audible. A melancholy wind was piping high in the air, from over the sea; you might fancy it the aerial lamentation of the drowned.

He was passing the churchyard now, and stopped partly to light a cigar, partly to look at the old church, the effect of which, in the moonlight, was singular. Its gable and towers cast a sharp black shadow across the grass and gravestones, like that of a gigantic hand, whose finger pointed toward him. He smiled cynically as the fancy struck him.

"Another grave, there, I should not wonder, if the news is true. What an ass that fellow is! Another grave, I dare say; and in my present luck, I suppose I shall fill it—fill it! That's ambiguous; yes, the more like an oracle. That shadow does look curiously like a finger pointing at me!"

He smoked for a time, leaning on the pier of the iron wicket, that from this side admits to the churchyard, and looking in, with thoughts very far from edifying.

"This will be the second disagreeable discovery, without reckoning Carmel, I shall have made since my arrival in this queer corner of the world. Who could have anticipated meeting Laura, here; or that whining fool, Carmel? Who would have fancied that Jennings, of all men, would have turned up in this out-of-the-way nook? By Jove, I'm like Saint Paul, hardly out of the shipwreck when a viper fastens on my hand. Old Sprague made us turn all that into elegiacs. I wonder whether I could make elegiacs now."

He loitered slowly on, by the same old road, into Castle-street, the high-street of the quaint little town of steep roofs and many gables.

The hall-door of the Verney Arms was open, and the light of the lamp glowed softly on the pavement.

Mr. Marston hated suspense. He would rather make a bad bargain, off-hand, than endure the torture of a long negotiation. He would stride out to meet a catastrophe rather than await its slow, sidelong approaches. This intolerance of uncertainty made him often sudden in action. He had come down to the town simply to reconnoitre. He was beginning, by this time, to meditate something more serious.

Under the shadow of the houses opposite, he walked slowly up and down the silent flagway, eyeing the door of the Verney Arms askance, as he finished his cigar.

It so happened, that exactly as he had

thrown away the stump of it, a smoker, who had just commenced his, came slowly down the steps of the Verney Arms, and stood upon the deserted flagway, and as he puffed indolently, he looked up the street, and down the street, and up at the sky.

The splendid moon shone full on his face, and Mr. Marston knew him. He was tall and slight, and rather good-looking, with a face of great intelligence, heightened with something of enthusiasm, and stood there smoking, in happy unconsciousness that an unfriendly eye was watching him across the street.

Mr. Marston stood exactly opposite. The smoker, who had emerged from the Verney Arms, stood before the centre of the steps, and Mr. Marston, on a sudden, as if he was bent on walking straight through him into the hotel, walked at a brisk pace across the street, and halted, within a yard, in front of him.

"I understand," said Marston instantly, in a low, stern tone, "that you said at Black's, when I was away yachting, that you had something to say to me."

The smoker had lowered his cigar, and was evidently surprised, as well he might be; he looked at him hard for some time, and at length replied as grimly:

"Yes, I said so; yes, I do; I mean to speak to you."

"All right; no need to raise our voices here, though; I think you had better find some place where we can talk without exciting attention."

"Come this way," said the tall young man, turning suddenly and walking up the street at a leisurely pace. Mr. Marston walked beside him, a yard or two apart. They might be very good friends, for anything that appeared to a passer-by. He turned down a short and narrow by-street, with only room for a house or two, and they found themselves on the little common that is known as the Green of Cardyllion. The sea, at its further side, was breaking in long, tiny waves along the shingle, the wind came over the old castle with a melancholy sighing; the green was solitary; and only here and there, from the windows of the early little town, a light gleamed. The moon shone bright on the green, turning the grass to grey, and silvering the ripples on the dark estuary, and whitening the misty outlines of the noble Welsh mountains across the water. A more tranquillising scene could scarcely be imagined.

When they had got to the further end, they stopped, as if by common consent.

"I'm ready to hear you," said Marston.

"Well, I have only to tell you, and I'm glad of this opportunity, that I have ascertained the utter falsehood of your stories, and that you are a coward and a villain."

"Thanks; that will do, Mr. Jennings," answered Marston, growing white with fury, but speaking with cold and quiet precision. "You have clenched this matter by an insult which I should have answered by cutting you across the face with this"—and he made his cane whistle in the air—"but that I reserve you for something more effectual, and shall run no risk of turning the matter into a police-office affair. I have neither pistols nor friend here. We must dispense with formalities; we can do all that is necessary for ourselves, I suppose. I'll call to-morrow, early, at the Verney Arms. A word or two will settle everything."

He raised his hat ever so little, implying that that conference, for the present, was over; but before he could turn Mr. Jennings, who did not choose to learn more than was unavoidable to his honour, said,

"You will find a note at the bar."

"Address it Richard Wynyard, then."

"Your friend?"

"No; myself."

"Oh! a false name?" sneered Mr. Jennings.

"You may use the true one, of course. My tailor is looking for me a little more zealously, I fancy, than you were; and if you publish it in Cardyllion, it may lead to his arresting me, and saving you all further trouble in this, possibly, agitating affair." The young man accompanied these words with a cold laugh.

"Well, Richard Wynyard, be it," said Mr. Jennings, with a slight flush.

And with these words, the two young men turned their backs on each other.

Mr. Jennings walked along beside the shingle, with the sound of the light waves in his ears, and thinking rather hurriedly, as men will, whom so serious a situation has suddenly overtaken.

Marston turned, as I said, the other way, and without entering the town again, approached Malory by the narrow road that passes close under the castle walls, and follows the line of the high banks overlooking the estuary.

If there be courage and mental activity, and no conscience, we have a very dangerous devil.

A spoiled child, in which self is supreme, who has no softness of heart, and some cleverness and energy, easily degenerates into that sort of Satan. And yet, in a kind of way, Marston was popular. He could spend money freely—it was not his own—and when he was in spirits he was amusing.

When he stared in Jennings's face this evening, the bruise and burning of an old jealousy were in his heart. The pain of that hellish hate is often lightly inflicted; but what is more cruel than vanity?

He had abandoned the pursuit in which that jealousy was born, but the hatred remained. And now he had his revenge in hand. It is a high stake, one's life on a match of pistol-shooting. But his brute courage made nothing of it. It was an effort to him to think himself in danger, and he did not make that effort. He was thinking how to turn the situation to account.

CHAPTER XX. THE WOOD OF PLAS YLWD.

NEXT morning, Mr. Marston, we learned, had been down to Cardyllion early. He had returned at about ten o'clock, and he had his luggage packed up, and despatched again to the proprietor of the Verney Arms.

So we might assume that he was gone.

The mountain that had weighed on Laura Grey's spirits was perceptibly lightened. I heard her whisper to herself, "Thank God!" when she heard Rebecca Torkill's report, and the further intelligence that their guest had told her and Thomas Jones that he was going to the town to return no more to Malory. Laura was now, again, quite like herself.

For my part, I was a little glad, and (shall I confess it?) also a little sorry! I had not quite made up my mind respecting this agreeable Mr. Marston, of whom Mr. Carmel and Miss Grey had given each so alarming a character.

About an hour later I was writing to mamma, and sitting at the window, when raising my eyes I saw Laura Grey and Mr. Marston, much to my surprise, walking side by side, up the avenue towards the hall-door. They appeared to be in close conversation; Mr. Marston seemed to talk volubly and carelessly, and cut the heads off the weeds with his cane, as he sauntered by her side. Laura Grey's handkerchief she held to her eyes, except now and then, when she spoke a few words, as it seemed, passionately.

When they came to the court-yard, op-

posite to the hall-door, she broke away from him, hurried across, ran up the steps, and shut the door. He stood where she had left him, looking after her and smiling. I thought he was going to follow; he saw me in the window, and raised his hat still smiling, and with this farewell salute he turned on his heel and walked slowly away towards the gate.

I ran to the hall, and there found Laura Grey. She had been crying, and was agitated.

"Ethel, darling," she said, "let nothing on earth induce you to speak to that man again. I implore of you to give me your solemn promise. If he speaks truth it will not cost you anything, for he says he is going away this moment not to return.

It certainly looked very like it, for he had actually despatched his two boxes, he had "tipped" the servants handsomely at the steward's house, and having taken a courteous leave of them, and left with Mrs. Torkill a valedictory message of thanks for me, he had got into a "fly" and driven off to the Verney Arms.

Well, whether for good or ill, he had now unquestionably taken his departure; but not without leaving a sting. The little he had spoken to Miss Grey, at the moment of his flight, had proved, it seemed, a Parthian arrow tipped with poison. She seemed to grow more and more miserable every hour. She had lain down on her bed, and was crying bitterly, and trembling. I began to grow vexed at the cruelty of the man who had deliberately reduced her to that state. I knew not what gave him the power of torturing her. If I was angry, I was also intensely curious. My questions produced no clearer answers than this. "Nothing, dear, that you could possibly understand without first hearing a very long story. I hope the time is coming when I may tell it all to you. But the secret is not mine; it concerns other people; and at present I must keep it."

Mr. Marston had come and gone, then, like a flash of light, leaving my eyes dazzled. The serenity of Malory seemed now too quiet for me; the day was dull. I spent my time sitting in the window, or moping about the place. I must confess that I had, by no means, the horror of this stranger that the warnings of Mr. Carmel and Laura Grey ought, I suppose, to have inspired. On the contrary, his image came before me perpetually, and everything I looked at, the dark trees, the window-sill, the garden,

the estuary, and the ribs of rock round which the cruel sea was sporting, recalled the hero of a terrible romance.

I tried in vain to induce Laura to come with me for a walk, late in the afternoon. So I set out alone, turning my back on Cardyllion, in the direction of Penruthyn Priory. The sun was approaching the western horizon as I drew near the picturesque old farm-house of Plas Ylwd.

A little to the south of this stretches a fragment of old forest, covering some nine or ten acres of peaty ground. It is a decaying wood, and in that melancholy and miserable plight, I think, very beautiful. I would commend it as a haunt to artists in search of "studies," who love huge trees with hollow trunks, some that have "cast" half their boughs as deer do their antlers; some wreathed and laden with ivy, others that stretch withered and barkless branches into the air; ground that is ribbed and unequal, and cramped with great ringed snake-like roots, that writhe and knot themselves into the earth; here and there over-spread with little jungles of bramble, and broken and burrowed by rabbits.

Into this grand and singular bit of forest, now glorified by the coloured light of evening, I had penetrated some little way.

Arrested in my walk by the mellow song of a blackbird, I listened in the sort of ecstasy that every one has, I suppose, experienced, under similar circumstances, and I was in the full enjoyment of this sylvan melody, when I was startled, and the bird put to flight by the near report of fire-arms.

Once or twice I had heard boys shooting at birds in this wood, but they had always accompanied their practice with shouting and loud talking.

A dead silence followed this. I had no reason for any misgivings about so natural an interruption in such a place, but I did feel an ominous apprehension.

I began to move, and was threading my way through one of these blackberry thickets, when I heard, close to my side, the branches of some underwood thrust aside, and Mr. Marston, looking pale and wicked, walked quickly by.

It was plain he did not see me; I was screened by the stalks and sprays through which I saw him.

He had no weapon as he passed me; he was drawing on his glove. The sudden appearance of Mr. Marston, whom I believed to be by this time miles away—at the other side of Cardyllion—was a shock that rather confirmed my misgivings.

I waited till he was quite gone, and then

passed down the path he had come by. I saw nothing to justify alarm, so I walked a little in the same direction, looking to the right and left.

In a little opening among the moss-grown trunks of the trees, I soon saw something that frightened me. It was a man lying on his back, deadly pale, upon the ground; his waistcoat was open, and his shirt-front covered with blood, that seemed to ooze from under his hand, that was pressing on it; his hat was on the ground, some way behind. A pistol lay on the grass beside him, and another not far from his feet.

I was very much frightened, and the sight of blood made me feel faint. The wounded man saw me, I knew, for his eyes were fixed on me; his lips moved, and there was a kind of straining in his throat; he said a word or two, though I could not at first hear what. With a horrible reluctance, I came near and leaned a little over him, and then heard distinctly:

"Pray send help."

I bethought me instantly of the neighbouring farm-house of Plas Ylwd, and knowing this little forest tract well, I ran through it nearly direct to the farm-yard, and quickly succeeded in securing the aid of Farmer Prichard and all his family, except his wife, who stayed at home to get a bed ready for the reception of the wounded stranger.

We all trooped back again through the woods, at a trot, I at their head, quite forgetting my dignity in my excitement.

The wounded man appeared fainter. But he beckoned to us with his hand, without raising his arm, and with a great effort he said: "The blame is mine—all my fault—remember, if I die. I compelled this meeting."

I got Prichard to send his son, without a moment's delay, to Cardyllion, to bring Doctor Mervyn, and as they got the bleeding man on towards Plas Ylwd, I, in a state of high excitement, walked swiftly homeward, hoping to reach Malory before the declining light failed altogether.

SOMETHING LIKE A LORD MAYOR'S DAY.

In this our day and generation, the annual pageant known as "Lord Mayor's Show," is in an extremely unsatisfactory condition. With our modern matter-of-fact utilitarianism, we are half ashamed of its grotesque splendours; yet the venerable institution dies very hard, and no man now

alive may survive to see the day that the Lord Mayor will quietly go to Westminster in a first-class carriage on the Metropolitan District Railway. It would be well that a definite understanding were arrived at on the subject of Lord Mayor's day. If we are to have no more cakes and ale, if men in armour, six horse teams, bands and banners, are really nonsensical, and out of place in this age of iron of ours, let that stern, grim fact be recognised and acted on. If, on the other hand, there be a meaning and a virtue in such a pageant as Lord Mayor's show, why should it be gone about in a half-hearted, apologetic, moon-faced kind of way? In the beautiful allegorical language of the Transatlantic logician, "Let us go the whole hog, or none at all."

Sir Samuel Fludyer, Lord Mayor of London in the year 1761, the year of the marriage of good King George the Third, appears to have gone the whole hog with a thoroughness which would suggest that utilitarianism had not come into existence in his day. In a contemporary chronicle we find a very sprightly narrative of Sir Samuel's Lord Mayor's show, in which the king and queen, with "the rest of the royal family" participated, their majesties, indeed, not getting home from the Guildhall ball until two in the morning. Our sight-seer was an early riser. He found the morning foggy, as is common to this day in London about the 9th of November, but soon the fog cleared away, and the day was brilliantly fine—an exception, he notes, to what had already, in his time, become proverbial that the Lord Mayor's day is almost invariably a bad one. He took boat on the Thames, that he might accompany the procession of state barges on their way to Westminster. He reports "the silent highway" as being quite covered with boats and gilded barges. The barge of the Skinners' Company was distinguished by the outlandish dresses of strange-spotted skins and painted hides worn by the rowers. The barge belonging to the Stationers' Company, after having passed through one of the narrow arches of Westminster Bridge, and tacked about to do honour to the Lord Mayor's landing, touched at Lambeth, and took on board, from the archbishop's palace, a hamper of claret—the annual tribute of theology to learning. The tippie must have been good, for our chronicler tells us that it was "constantly reserved for the future regalement of the master, wardens, and court of assistants, and not suffered to be shared by

the common crew of liverymen." He did not care to witness the familiar ceremony of swearing in the Lord Mayor in Westminster Hall, but made the best of his way to the Temple-stairs, where it was the custom of the Lord Mayor to land on the conclusion of the aquatic portion of the pageant. There he found some of the City companies already landed, and drawn up in order in Temple-lane, between two rows of the train-bands, "who kept excellent discipline." Other of the companies were wiser in their generation; they did not land prematurely to cool their heels in Temple-lane, while the royal procession was passing along the Strand, but remained on board their barges regaling themselves comfortably. The Lord Mayor encountered Samaritans in the shape of the masters and benchers of the Temple, who invited him to come on shore and lunch with them in the Temple Hall.

Our sight-seer made his way as well as he could through the crowd to the Queen's Arms Tavern, at the corner of St. Paul's Churchyard, "kept by honest Bates, so remarkable for his good wines and good treatment in every other respect." There our sight-seer and his party had secured a room which commanded a complete view of both the royal and the civic processions. Every house from Temple-bar to Guildhall was crowded from top to bottom, and many had scaffoldings besides, carpets and rich hangings were hung out on the fronts all the way along; and our friend notes that the citizens were not mercenary, but "generously accommodated their friends and customers gratis, and entertained them in the most elegant manner, so that though their shops were shut, they might be said to have kept open house."

It is to be feared we do not thoroughly appreciate the advantages we derive from the exertions of the merry men commanded by Colonels Henderson and Fraser. For want of them, and "by the mismanagement of those who should have taken care to clear the way of hackney-coaches and other obstructions," the royal procession, which set out from St. James's Palace at noon, did not get to Cheapside until near four, when in the short November day it must have been getting dark. Our sight-seer, as the royal family passed his window, counted between twenty and thirty coaches-and-six belonging to them and to their attendants, besides those of the foreign ambassadors, officers of state, and the principal nobility. There preceded their majesties, the Duke of Cumberland,

Princess Amelia, the Duke of York, in a new state coach, the Princes William Henry and Frederic, the Princess Dowager of Wales, and the Princesses Augusta and Caroline in one coach, preceded by twelve footmen with black caps, and with guards and a grand retinue. The king and queen were in separate coaches, and had separate retinues. Our friend in the window of the Queen's Arms was in luck's way. From a booth at the eastern end of the churchyard the children of Christ Church Hospital paid their respects to their majesties, the senior scholar of the grammar school reciting a lengthy and loyal address, after which the boys chanted God Save the King. At last the royal family got to the house of Mr. Barclay, the Quaker, from the balcony of which, hung with crimson silk damask, they were to see, with what daylight remained, the civic procession that presently followed; but in the interval came Mr. Pitt, in his chariot, accompanied by Earl Temple. The great commoner was then in the zenith of his popularity, and our sight-seer narrates how, "at every step, the mob clung about every part of the vehicle, hung upon the wheels, hugged his footmen, and even kissed his horses. There was an universal huzza, and the gentlemen in the windows and the balconies waved their hats, and the ladies their handkerchiefs."

The Lord Mayor's state coach was drawn by six beautiful iron-grey horses, gorgeously caparisoned, and the companies made a grand appearance. Even a century ago, however, degeneracy had set in. Our sight-seer complains that the armourers' and braziers', the skimmers' and the fishmongers' companies, were the only companies that had something like the pageantry exhibited of old on the occasion. The armourers sported an archer riding erect in his car, having his bow in his left hand, and his quiver and arrows hanging behind his left shoulder; as also a man in complete armour. The skimmers were distinguished by seven of their company being dressed in fur, having their skins painted in the form of Indian princes. The pageant of the fishmongers consisted of a statue of Saint Peter finely gilt, a dolphin, two mermaids, and a couple of sea-horses; all which duly passed before Georgius Rex, as he leant over the balcony with his Charlotte by his side.

Our chronicler understood well the strategic movements indispensable to the zealous sight-seer. As soon as the Lord Mayor's procession had passed him, he "posted along the back lanes, to avoid the crowd,"

and got to the Guildhall in advance of the Lord Mayor. He had procured a ticket for the banquet through the interest of a friend, who was one of the committee for managing the entertainment, and also a "mazarine." It is explained that this was a kind of nickname given to the common councilmen, on account of their wearing mazarine blue silk-gowns. He learned that the doors of the hall had been first opened at nine in the morning for the admission of ladies into the galleries, who were the friends of the committee men, and who got the best places; and subsequently at twelve for the general reception of all who had a right to come in. What a terrible spell of waiting those fortunate unfortunates comprising the earliest batch must have had! The galleries presented a very brilliant show, and among the company below were all the officers of state, the principal nobility, and the foreign ambassadors. The Lord Mayor arrived at half-past six, and the sheriffs went straight to Mr. Barclay's to conduct the royal family to the hall. The passage from the hall-gate to steps leading to the King's Bench was lined with mazarines with candles in their hands, by aldermen in their red gowns, and gentlemen pensioners with their axes in their hands. At the bottom of the steps stood the Lord Mayor and the Lady Mayoress, with the entertainment committee, to receive the members of the royal family as they arrived. The princes and princesses, as they successively came in, waited in the body of the hall until their majesties' entrance. On their approach being announced the Lord and Lady Mayoress, as the chronicler puts it, advanced to the great door of the hall; and at their majesties' entrance, the Lord Mayor presented the City sword, which being returned, he carried before the king, the queen following with the Lady Mayoress behind her. "The music had struck up, but was drowned in the acclamations of the company; in short all was life and joy; even their giants, Gog and Magog, seemed to be almost animated." The king, at all events, was more than almost animated; he volubly praised the splendour of the scene, and was very gracious to the Lord Mayor, on the way to the council chamber, followed by the royal family and the reception committee. This room reached, the recorder delivered the inevitable addresses, and the wives and daughters of the aldermen were presented. These ladies had the honour of being saluted by his majesty, and of kissing the queen's hand, and then the sheriffs were knighted,

as also was the brother of the Lord Mayor. After half an hour's stay in the council chamber, the royal party returned into the hall, and were conducted to the upper end of it, called the hustings, where a table was provided for them, at which they sat by themselves. There had been a knotty little question of etiquette. The ladies-in-waiting on the queen had claimed the right of custom to dine at the same table with her majesty, but this was disallowed, and they dined at the table of the Lady Mayoress in the King's Bench. The royal table "was set off with a variety of emblematic ornaments beyond description elegant," and a superb canopy was placed over their majesties' heads at the upper end. For the Lord Mayor, aldermen, and their ladies, there was a table on the lower hustings. The privy councillors, ministers of state, and great nobles, dined at a table on the right of this; the foreign ministers at one on the left. For the mazarines and the general company there were eight tables in the body of the hall, while the judges, serjeants, &c., dined in the old council chamber, and the attendants of the distinguished visitors were regaled in the Court of Common Pleas.

George and his consort must have got up a fine appetite between noon and nine o'clock, the hour at which the dinner was served. The aldermen on the committee acted as waiters at the royal table. The Lord Mayor stood behind the king, "in quality of chief butler, while the Lady Mayoress waited on her majesty" in the same capacity, but soon after seats were taken they were graciously sent to their seats. The dinner consisted of three courses, besides the dessert, and the purveyors were Messrs. Horton and Birch, the same house which in the present day supplies most of the civic banquets. The bill of fare at the royal table is extant, and is worth a little study on the part of modern epicures:

FIRST SERVICE.

Turrones, venison, turtle soups, fish of every sort, viz., dorys, mullets, turbot, blets, tench, soals, &c., nine dishes.

SECOND SERVICE.

A fine roast, ortolans, teals, quails, ruffs, knotts, peachicks, snipes, partridges, pheasants, &c., nine dishes.

THIRD SERVICE.

Vegetables and made dishes, green pease, green morelles, green truffles, cardoons, artichokes, ducks' tongues, fat livers, &c., eleven dishes.

FOURTH SERVICE.

Curious ornaments in pastry and makes, jellies, blomenges in variety of shapes, figures, and colours, nine dishes.

In all, not including the dessert, there

were placed on the tables four hundred and fourteen dishes, hot and cold. Wine was varied and copious. In the language of the chronicler, "Champagne, burgundy, and other valuable wines were to be had everywhere, and nothing was so scarce as water." When the second course was being laid on the toasts began. The common crier, standing before the royal table, demanded silence, and then proclaimed aloud that their majesties drank to the health and prosperity of the Lord Mayor, aldermen, and common council of the City of London. Then the common crier, in the name of the civic dignitaries, gave the toast of health, long life, and prosperity to their most gracious majesties. After dinner there was no tarrying over the wine cup. The royal party retired at once to the council chamber, "where they had their tea." What became of the rest of the company is not mentioned, but clearly the Guildhall could have been no place for them. That was summarily occupied by an army of carpenters. The tables were struck and carried out. The hustings, where the great folks had dined, and the floor of which had been covered with rich carpeting, was covered afresh, and the whole hall rapidly got ready for the ball, with which the festivities were to conclude. On the return of their majesties, and as soon as they were seated under the canopy, the ball was opened by the Duke of York and the Lady Mayoress. It does not appear that the royal couple took the floor, but "other minuets succeeded by the younger branches of the royal family with ladies of distinction."

About midnight Georgius Rex, beginning probably to get sleepy with all this derangement of his ordinarily methodical way of living, signified his desire to take his departure, but things are not always possible even when kings are in question. Such was the hurry and confusion outside, at least that is the reason assigned by the chronicler, that there was great delay in fetching up the royal carriages to the Guildhall door. My own impression is that the coachmen were all drunk, not excepting the state coachman himself. Their majesties waited half an hour before their coach could be brought up, and perhaps, after all the interchange of civilities, went away in a tantrum at the end. It is clear the Princess Dowager of Wales did, for she waited some time in the temporary passage, "nor could she be prevailed on to retire into the hall." There was no procession on the return from

the City. The royal people trundled home as they best might, according as their carriages came to hand. But we are told that on the return journey, past midnight as it was, the crowd in some places was quite as great as it had been in the daytime, and that Mr. Pitt was vociferously cheered all the way to his own door. The king and queen did not get home to St. James's till two o'clock in the morning, and it is a confirmation of the suggestion that the coachman must have been drunk, that in turning under the gate one of the glasses of their coach was broken by the roof of the sentry-box. As for the festive people left behind in the Guildhall, they kept the ball up till three o'clock, and we are told that "the whole was concluded with the utmost regularity and decorum." Indeed, Sir Samuel Fludyer's Lord Mayor's day appears to have been a triumphant success. His majesty himself, we are told, was pleased to declare "that to be elegantly entertained he must come into the City." The foreign ministers in general expressed their wonder, and one of them politely said in French, that this entertainment was only fit for one king to give to another.

CLOSED AT TWELVE.

"SORRY to turn you out, gentlemen," said the landlord, "but it's a quarter to twelve, and the police is very strict since the New Act."

The scene was the parlour of a little, old, cosy tavern, where a few of us meet, now and then, for a quiet rubber. Upon this particular evening, the whist had been such as Hoyle or Cavendish might have dreamed of in a moment of delightful reverie. The players were equally matched; the cards were wonderfully impartial; the honours were always easy; neither party had scored more than the odd trick; each rubber had been composed of singles, and each side had won one rubber. The cards were being made for the conquering rubber, and we had stopped to discuss a lead of trumps in the last game, when the landlord entered and was sorry to turn us out.

"Upon my word, this is too bad," said the Captain (of volunteers); "we really must play this third rubber."

"Then you must play it without me," said the Lawyer, jumping up briskly and preparing to depart. "A man in my profession can't afford to spend the night in Bow-street, and be fined forty shillings to-

morrow morning. Good night, gentlemen," and off he trotted.

"This is the sort of thing that makes this New Act so unpopular," said the Merchant, shuffling the cards. "What harm could we do if we stayed here after twelve?"

"Unpopular?" asked the Author; "with whom is the Act unpopular? Do you mean with the publicans?"

"No," replied the Merchant, "I mean with the people—with everybody."

"Yes, but with what people? Who is everybody? It isn't unpopular with the teetotal people, nor with the temperance people. Surely they are somebodies."

"No, no," interposed the Captain, "he means everybody who likes his glass of grog, and, being an Englishman, don't like to be dictated to as to when he shall have it, and when he shan't have it."

"You don't mean to say you object to the clause which prohibits the sale of liquors to drunken men!"

"Certainly not," said the Merchant. "I approve of that most decidedly. And also of the clause about minors. But I refer to the twelve o'clock closing. What right has this New Act to turn us out now?"

"The same right that the Old Act had to turn us out at one o'clock. You never objected to that?"

"Well, one o'clock was late enough for anybody."

"Too late for many people. However, that's a matter of opinion. Once admit that the law can regulate the hours of closing—and everybody has admitted that principle—and the difference between one hour and another becomes simply a question of expediency and experience."

"But do you think twelve o'clock a good hour?" asked the Captain.

"Yes; the best hour. Every one who is obliged to get up at a reasonably early hour in the morning ought to be in bed by midnight. This class constitutes the vast majority of the people, and laws are made for majorities."

"But there are exceptions to every rule."

"It is just striking twelve. Come along with me and I'll show you some exceptions to this rule."

When we were outside the tavern, walking rapidly along in the damp night air, the Merchant suddenly observed, "Stop! I am an exception. It's very wet to-night, and I should like a glass of whisky."

"Already? Why, you had one three minutes ago at the tavern."

"I don't mean at this very moment; but I shall want a glass of whisky to keep the cold out."

"You have plenty of whisky at home, I presume."

"But suppose I want it before I get home?"

"You might control your desire, or stop at your club."

"But suppose I don't want to control my desire, and I am two miles from my club, and still want my whisky?"

"Then yours is a very exceptional case; but it is one which this New Act has been weak enough to provide for. Go to one of the houses licensed to keep open an hour later than twelve."

"I might not be able to reach one of them by one o'clock."

"Then you would be no worse off than under the Old Act; for that closed all the public-houses at one."

"Yes; but it allowed them all to keep open till one, while the New Act only allows a few to be open, and I might not be near one of these exceptional houses."

"Under such very exceptional circumstances you ought always to carry a flask in your pocket, or take a cab, or live nearer Covent Garden. But, surely, you do not argue that such a number of supposes can form a valid objection to the law?"

"No, not in my own case. But I was thinking of workpeople kept out late at night and unable to get a drink before going to bed."

"I know very few classes of workpeople who are unable to get to bed before twelve. The printers, the bakers, and all other workmen who are kept up after midnight, can easily club together in their shops and offices and buy spirits by the gallon, and beer by the barrel, if they must have a drain after work."

"Ah, but that is not the same to them as the public-house."

"Not the same; but can you deny that it's better for them and cheaper for them?"

Just at this stage of the conversation we came to one of the specially licensed houses. The landlord was standing at the door, and as each customer presented himself the landlord asked, "What theatre?" Then the visitor gave the name of a theatre, and was admitted.

"There!" exclaimed the Merchant, "we haven't been to the theatre, and we can't get in even here."

"Oh!" said the Captain, laughing, "it

isn't as bad as all that. There's nothing of that sort in the Act. Walk up and I'll show you how it works."

We advanced, the Captain leading. As he approached the landlord he said boldly:

"Three! St. James's Theatre."

"Have you all been to the theatre?" asked the landlord.

"Often," replied the Captain, with a wink, and we passed into the bar, and called for some drink, which we did not want. Fifty other persons, crowded into a small room, were doing the same thing. There seemed to be something clandestine, and therefore exciting, in this special drink. There were people outside who couldn't get it; we had used strategy to obtain an entrance; the subtle exhilaration of selfishness and success inspired us. Otherwise the bar was an ordinary bar, the company an ordinary company, the drink a very ordinary drink. We had all passed the house half a dozen times a day for years, and never once thought of entering it.

"Suppose they were to find out that we had not been to a theatre to-night," said the Merchant, in a stage whisper, looking around suspiciously.

"I don't think they care much about it," replied the Captain, "provided you don't confess it before the crowd outside the door, principally composed of people who would do no good to the house. But finish your glass and come along. There are half a dozen such places between here and supper."

Off we went, and in twenty minutes had stopped at four other specially licensed houses. We walked into two of these without a word. At the other two the farce of having been to the theatre was repeated. Behold us seated, at twenty minutes to one o'clock, before a supper of grilled bones, at a fifth specially licensed house, in a room full of drinkers.

"What do you think of the New Act now?" asked the Author.

"Not a word to say," replied the Merchant, struggling with his bone. "All is happiness and joy."

"There's no great hardship about this," said the Captain.

"Except for our wives. When we were playing cards we had all made up our minds to go home to supper. Now when shall we see a bed?"

"See a bed!" exclaimed the Merchant; "this is seeing life. Why, my dear boy, it's all the fault of the New Act. This is our practical protest against it." The Mer-

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chant's voice was loud, and he was in difficulties with his bone.

"It certainly encourages lying," said the Captain. "Why should a man be obliged to say that he has been to a theatre?"

"That's not in the Act. It is one of the stupidities of the police or the landlords. But the police authorities are stupid enough in regard to the theatres without such assistance."

"How so?"

"Why, the Act gives them authority to issue these special licenses, and they have stupidly decided only to license those public-houses which are near the theatres."

"I don't see the stupidity of it. Great numbers of people attend the theatres and are employed at the theatres. When they come out they need something to drink. Hence these specially licensed houses."

"Wait a moment," said the Author. "Don't you know that every theatre is itself a public-house? There is a gallery bar, a pit bar, a saloon for the stalls and dress-circle, waiters to bring refreshments to the private boxes, and a canteen behind the scenes, or a public-house next to the stage-door, for the actors, carpenters, and other employés."

"Quite true," said the Captain. "Didn't think of that."

"Very well. Now, as a rule, every theatre is closed by a little after eleven o'clock. Up to that hour every person in the theatre, auditor or employé, can get as much to eat and drink as he requires at the theatre bars, or at the nearest tavern. From that hour till twelve he can have the run of all the public-houses. Then why license the taverns nearest the theatres to keep open till one for the accommodation of these special classes of people, who are already doubly accommodated?"

"But do you mean to say that you would have no specially licensed houses?" asked the Captain, looking very wise.

"That's not the question. But if I did have any, I would select those which are furthest from the theatres, so that auditors and actors might get their supper beer when they reach home. At present, all the special drinking must be done near the theatres, which already possess special advantages in their refreshment saloons."

At this moment a waiter came to the box, and said, "Ten minutes to one, gentlemen. Any more orders before the bar closes?"

We gave our orders, and the Merchant, speaking very mysteriously, said, "Make it six goes, waiter. Perhaps a friend might drop in."

"All right, sir," replied the waiter, and at eight minutes to one we began our night-caps, an extra nightcap for each being placed in the centre of the table as a reserve? Where were the police? At half-past one we were still talking and drinking, and the extra nightcap was still held in reserve. At a quarter to two we were all sleepy enough to need it, and had quite ceased to care for the New Act.

"Where shall we go now?" asked the Captain, as we rose to leave the specially licensed house.

"Home, sweet home," responded the Merchant, with an attempt at a tune.

"Hush, gentlemen," said the waiter, and hurried us through the hall and ushered us into the street.

It was still raining. On the pavement opposite stood a tall policeman. Coming round the nearest corner was a still taller policeman. The situation was critical.

"We're outflanked," whispered the Captain, recollecting his autumn manoeuvres. "Bow-street and forty shillings to a dead certainty."

"I'll pay the fines," said the Merchant, who is always proudest of his great wealth at two o'clock in the morning. "Come on, I say, you bobby!"

"Cab!" shouted the Author, drowning the Merchant's challenge. The cab came across the street; the tall policemen looked quietly on; and off we drove.

"I say," said the Captain, "those bobbies must have known us. They didn't even ask our names and addresses."

"They'd better not," interposed the Merchant.

"Perhaps they will be satisfied with fining and imprisoning the landlord, and cancelling his license. The New Act is very severe."

"Is it?" contemptuously remarked the Merchant. "This seems to me very like the good old times. Let's go to the club."

"Oh, no! We can do that at any time. Let's go to the Haymarket. I know a place where we can get oysters at all hours," said the Captain.

"Respectable?"

"Well, it's a refreshment place. It isn't disreputable that I ever knew."

"But you can't get any drink there," said the Merchant.

"Can't I?" replied the Captain, laying his finger upon his cigar, which he supposed to be his nose.

"No, it's too risky," the Author interrupted, decidedly. "If you must drink any more, let us go to the club."

"Oh, but clubs are always open. There's no fun in that. Any man who can afford to pay three or four guineas a year subscription need care nothing for the early-closing movement."

"I know a club which is open all night, and the subscription is only sixteen shillings a year. That's cheap enough for a working man—eh?"

"Plenty cheaper than that. Hold on! I say, cabby! Turn to the right about. Now, drive till I tell you to stop. I say," said the Captain, coming in from the cab window, "I know a club where there's no subscription. How do they manage that?"

Nobody could explain, and while we were debating the subject the cab stopped at a small door in a narrow street. The Captain led us up the street and down the street, and finally, when the cab had driven away, we arrived at the same door again. A gentle push and it opened. We entered a small, well-furnished room, and rang a bell. Presently, a waiter appeared and brought the refreshments required. We paid for them and he disappeared. This transaction was repeated at intervals. One or two other customers dropped in. The conversation turned upon the superiority of Brahmaism to the dogmas of Confucius. We were all eloquent. We enjoyed ourselves very much. At four o'clock we descended to the street and again remembered the New Act.

"Subterranean communication with some public-house in the next street?" said the Merchant, looking curiously at the closed door, and speaking with what may be called excessive deliberation.

"Nonsense. Free club. Been there—often," said the Captain, sternly, but jerkily. "Wait! Can't go home. New Act. Arrest man drunk in—own house."

"Not at all. Not at all. Not unless he makes a disturbance. More chance of being arrested drunk outside of your own house. Hi! Cabby!"

A cab and a doze; home and daylight; two gaslights in the hall and a creaky stairs; a cold bath and a Caudle lecture. "But, my love, I have been visiting the public-houses simply to describe them for ALL THE YEAR ROUND."

"Don't tell me, sir! You seem to forget, sir, that, under the New Act, all the public-houses are Closed at Twelve!"

THE DYING TIGER.

I FIRST met the tiger on the Jerome Park racecourse, New York, United States, when I was personally introduced to the royal beast by a menagerie-haunting friend. The Transatlantic tiger was a very fine animal, and appeared only striped as to his nether extremities; indeed, his symmetrical yet powerful shoulders were completely covered by one of those garments that the bucks and bloods of the regency delighted in calling a "white upper Benjamin." The tiger's head was finely formed, and exhibited unmistakable traces of the hairdresser's art; his mouth wore a pleasant smile, and had it not been for an occasional flash of the dark eye, which revealed at once the true nature of the man-eater, I might almost have believed myself in the presence of a thoroughly domesticated—as well as highly-groomed—animal. His paws were singularly beautiful, small, delicate, strangely soft and flexible, and almost covered with immense diamond rings. Jewels of price also adorned his deep chest, and it was pleasing to see that this highly-ornamental creature was by no means entirely carnivorous, inasmuch as he was eating lobster-salad, and taking champagne freely. The tiger was exceedingly amiable, cracked jokes, told stories, and, instead of feeding upon me, fed me upon the very best luncheon I ever ate on a racecourse during the whole course of an ill-spent life, which is saying a good deal.

Moreover, he introduced me to Mrs. Tiger, a very handsome and graceful creature, richly attired in the furry spoils of many wild animals (doubtless captured by the tiger himself), and positively blazing with diamonds. I was most favourably impressed with my first introduction to the feline race, and on being invited to call at the menagerie, accepted the proffered hospitality with effusion. Now the tiger dwelt in Twenty-fifth-street, and his lair consisted of a very handsome house, with an air of great solidity and comfort about it. It was devoid of the pretentious character so common to American houses, which—scorning to retire into modest by-ways, silent lanes, and tranquil nooks—prefer to cling closely to the main road and attract the admiration of the passers-by. An

American house nearly always looks, or tries its best to look, span new, and seems to challenge the spectator's attention in these words: "Lookee here, stranger, take notice, walk up, and observe me carefully; guess you don't see such a sight every day. No, sir-r-r. Here I am, spick and span, glitter and shine, brown stone, paint, glass, and all the modern improvements, just built by that prominent citizen, Nehemiah J. Bunker, Esquire, of Bunkersville, Pa., at the cost of one hundred thousand dollars. Yes, sir-r-r."

I approached the dwelling of the gorgeous animal with some degree of excitement, inasmuch as dark stories were rife as to the fate of those inconsiderate persons who had ventured into the creature's den without good and sufficient escort. These sufferers had, I was told, been stripped not of their flesh and blood indeed, which would have been a severe but endurable calamity, but had been utterly denuded of their money, of all losses the most intolerable. Marching up the tall "stoop," I rang a bell, and was immediately admitted by a black man, who received me in a handsome room furnished in excellent taste, and adorned with a few choice bronzes and fine engravings. A dim religious light pervaded this ante-den, and the apartment was tolerably well filled with gentlemen, whose appearance at least did not betray any traces of disastrous conflict with the mighty monarch of the jungle.

Cigars were being freely smoked by the tiger and his friends, and after a preliminary glass of brandy, the whole company adjourned to the supper-room, where a magnificent repast was laid out. No luxury that daintiness could desire or money purchase was absent from this banquet. Delicious oysters from Blue Point, raw, fried, and stewed, crisp celery from New Jersey, diamond-backed terrapin from the bay of Chesapeake, neat little quail from the corn-fields of the West, tiny rice-birds from the swamps of South Carolina, regal wild turkey from the wilds of Kansas, succulent grouse from the prairies of Illinois, and never-to-be-forgotten canvas-back from the marshes of the Potomac, covered the board of the hospitable tiger, while for the benefit of those who hungered after plainer food, a mighty "Porterhouse" steak exhaled an appetising odour.

Delicious salads and mayonnaises were not absent; champagne corks popped; claret and burgundy were poured forth with a liberal hand. The tiger, seated at the head

of the table, was full of attention towards his guests; the whole entertainment was charmingly complete; and the cookery and waiting perfect.

During this scene of revelry my ears had been, from time to time, assailed by a curious clicking, whirring sound, mingled with an occasional rattle, an ominous sound withal, distantly reminding me of the clash of the Miserere on the ear yet full of the joyous air trilled by Maffio Orsini at that Ferrarese supper, where, as a friend of mine (from Chicago) remarks, "Lucrezia Borgia gets square with that tuneful young patrician." On inquiring the cause of this singular sound, I was informed by my very affable neighbour, a general, and the wearer of the biggest diamond I ever saw upon a man, that the tiger—being an animal of a playful disposition—kept his toys in the next room, and that these were of so interesting a nature that many great men, judges, generals, railroad chiefs, &c., found it almost impossible to let the seductive playthings alone.

On entering the toy-shop I was once more disagreeably reminded of Donizetti's opera by seeing Gubetta dealing a pack of cards playfully enclosed within a silver box, with an open space at the top, against which the pack was held by a spring. Gubetta was slipping off the cards one by one, and was paying and receiving (mostly receiving) the piles of counters cheerfully placed by the visitors to the menagerie on a suite of cards laid out upon the table. It was explained to me that the pack, after being shuffled and cut, was put into the silver box, that the odd numbers in position, as cards one, three, five, seven, &c., won, and that the alternate even numbers, as second, fourth, sixth, and eighth cards lost. The tiger's visitors were anxiously "stacking their pile" on the lay out, or dummy suite on the table, and were trying the eternal systems of gamblers to counter-balance the small but unconquerable percentage of chances in favour of the bank. I was, then, at last in sight of faro, the famous European game of the last century, at which it is reported that the great Scottish financier, James Law, of Bank of France fame and Mississippi notoriety, laid the foundation of his fortune, and by aid of which the excellent Jacques Casanova, Chevalier de Seingalt (by right of invention), kept the pot boiling when no lottery schemes, conjuring, or other tricks, were to the fore. In an almost deserted corner of the toy-shop the revolving wheel and the little

ivory ball were spinning, but did not seem to tempt visitors very much; indeed, considering that, out of twenty-seven chances, the bank reserved to itself two zeros and a spread eagle, the lukewarmness of speculators was not to be wondered at.

The tiger did not meddle with the toys himself, as the noble animal was entirely occupied in receiving the numerous guests who now began to flock in. All these gentlemen fell either upon the supper or upon the wine, brandy, and cigars of the amiable tiger, and seemed to be animated with a laudable desire to take as much out of him as possible. I am bound to admit that—unlimited stimulants to the contrary notwithstanding—the guests of the jungle behaved themselves very well, won without childish exultation, and lost with Spartan fortitude, every man of them “*beau joueur s’il en fust oncques*.” The later the hour the more bland and cheerful waxed the lively tiger, but perhaps this peculiarity may have been due to the well-known nocturnal habits of the great carnivora. Bidding the tiger farewell, I received a hearty shake from his velvet paw—claws retracted as usual—but as I walked towards the Brevoort House, I wondered how much mischief those carefully concealed talons had done in their day, what heart-strings had cracked under their terrible clutch, and what fair lives and blossoming fortunes had been crushed by those beautiful white teeth and square massive jaws.

The *Felis Americanus auratus* will probably exist for some time longer, but in Europe the tiger is on his last legs, and in this realm of England has at length been utterly exterminated. He had enjoyed a pretty good innings, and the remarks thereant of the ingenuous Mr. Samuel Pepys, under the date of November the 11th, 1661, are quaint enough: “Captain Ferrers carried me, the first time that ever I saw any gaming-house, to one, entering into Lincoln’s-inn-fields, at the end of Bell-yard, where strange the folly of men to lay and lose so much money, and very glad was I to see the manner of a gamester’s life, which I see is very miserable, and poor and unmanly.”

Pepys’s sterner contemporary, Evelyn, writing in 1683, mentions “my lord of St. Albans, now grown so blind that he could not see to take his meat. He has lost immense sums at play, which yet, at about eighty years old, he continues, having one that sits by him to name the spots on the cards.”

And probably but few have forgotten the entry of the same writer on the day when James the Second was proclaimed king, a passage which has inspired one of the finest descriptions in the whole range of English literature. Evelyn says, speaking of the court of the late King Charles the Second: “I can never forget the inexpressible luxury and profaneness, gaming, and all dissoluteness, and, as it were, total forgetfulness of God (it being Sunday evening) which this day se’nnight I was witness of, the king sitting and toying with his concubines, Portsmouth, Cleaveland, and Mazarine, &c., a French boy singing love songs in that glorious gallery, whilst about twenty of the great courtiers and other dissolute persons were at basquet, round a large table, a bank of at least two thousand pounds in gold before them; upon which two gentlemen who were with me made reflections with astonishment. Six days after all was in the dust.”

In the days of my youth the tiger still lurked in London, and, although dislodged from his favourite jungle in St. James’s-street, still retained a well-known lair amid the bamboos of Piccadilly and Albemarle-street. But he was ultimately hunted out (chiefly it is believed through the agency of a Manchester man, into whom he had stuck his claws rather deeply), and was compelled to take refuge on foreign race-courses and other wild spots.

Meanwhile, a tiger of Semitic breed, a rotund, well-fed, jovial animal, defended, with great bravery and pertinacity, his snug retreat in the neat little horse-loving and sausage-producing town of Newmarket. This bland, cheerful old specimen was a great favourite with the patrician frequenters of Newmarket, who were wont to wind up a day spent in horse-racing by “coming up to the scratch” with the favoured animal in his cheerful den. The gay old fellow is still alive, sleek, merry, and glossy in his coat as ever, but his “institution,” as Mark Twain would say, “is dead now.”

A very hard-dying tiger was the tough old fellow who established his cave in the Subscription Rooms at Doncaster during the week sacred to the patron saint of Yorkshire—Saint Leger. This persistent creature hung on tooth and nail with desperate tenacity, and was only destroyed a few months ago. He was a tiger of the rough, unkempt sort, this man-eater of Yorkshire, and did not boast the silky manners of his more aristocratic congeners.

He also omitted the ceremony of fattening up his victims before he struck them. Perhaps the formula was unnecessary, as most of his visitors appeared to have partaken of at least sufficient refreshment before they ventured into his den. No more unlovely scene could well be imagined than the wild-beast show at Doncaster. Huge bull-necked men crowded thickly round the tables; the smoke of countless cigars—mostly of the Houndsditch brand—poisoned the air, already heavily charged with the aroma of Cognac, old Jamaica, and other spirituous liquors, specially prepared for the Doncaster market. "Seven's the main! Seven! Deuce-ace! Out!" and like ejaculations, uttered in tones which can only be produced by late hours and bad liquor, rang hoarsely through the unsavoury den. The visitors were mostly attired in the rough garments commonly seen on the racecourse, and, if possible, the manners of the wearers were rougher than their coats.

Never was the pastime facetiously known as "shaking your elbow," pursued under more disagreeable circumstances. The heat was intense; the passion of the gamblers furious, as their bloodshot eyes glared upon the little ivory cubes which bore fortune or misfortune upon their sides.

Conspicuous among the players was a keen-visaged, hawk-eyed man—one of the very few men I have ever seen who seemed to thoroughly enjoy the feverish excitement of play. There was no affectation of calm indifference or sullen endurance in his finely-cut and mobile features, which vibrated at the frowns and smiles of the fickle goddess, as does a veritable Cremona at the touch of a master. Amid the stolid rough-hewn countenances crowded round the table, it was refreshing to see that of one player "par excellence." Another noticeable Doncaster gambler was an old man whose visage was decorated with a nose red enough to serve all men as a beacon to warn them from his acquaintance, and whose hands trembled exceedingly, either from excitement or liquor. This hoary sinner's method of operation was to slowly wriggle the dice out of the box; but he never, so far as I saw, prospered. He threw crabs, took a back hand, and threw aces. He was almost always wrong. I wonder whether the old rascal had a starving wife and family at home, or whether he had commenced life by breaking away from the conventionalities, stealing a horse, and setting up for himself on

the turf. He certainly wore a deep crape hatband; but whether that emblem of mourning was worn in memory of a deceased father (who had cut him off with a shilling), or of a dead wife (who had preferred the grave to the old sinner) I never knew. Possibly it was donned merely to conceal the shabbiness of his beaver; but perhaps the true solution is that he wore his deep hatband merely as a last forlorn clinging to respectability—a last desperate endeavour to impose upon a credulous public the belief that he had once had somebody belonging to him.

But the common wild-beast show did not comprise all the attractions of the tiger of Yorkshire, for there was an inner den sacred against intrusion from any "small deer," and devoted entirely to the greater beasts of chase, such as the mighty stag who proudly tossed his antlered coronet—lord of countless broad acres, and vast forests of sturdy oak and wide-spreading beech. Inferior beings who were by favour permitted to pass the portals of this torture-chamber, stood aghast at seeing the rapid demolition of the big game, their oaks and their beeches, their lands and their beeves, their messuages and tenements, by the omnivorous monster who stood ready to do battle with all comers.

But it is happily all over with the Doncaster tiger; and although a few tiger-cubs may still hover around our racecourses, even they are doomed; their jungles are watched by a careful body of shikarries, and their long cherished hunting-grounds know them no more.

The French tiger, or *Felis Frascatus*, was long since knocked over. He, his suppers, his salons, and his high and mighty game have long since been things of the past. It is true that after the extinction of the royal beast numerous smaller specimens of the same genus lurked in pleasure-loving Paris. But these were small fry, mere tiger-cats, ocelots, or catamounts who preyed mainly on the outskirts of society, picking up the unconsidered waifs and strays, the unfledged gosling, or the silly lame duck. Their lairs were in unfrequented places, and although presenting certain allurements, were powerless to attract the big game which in the golden days of the feline race frequented the numerous luxurious dens of the Palais Royal. They were unlucky too, for when by any slice of good luck they had enticed some noble game within reach of their claws, he was very apt to break loose, make a terrible

noise and smash up the wild cats, den and all.

The Felis Belgicus was famous from an early day, and long before the steady-going, home-dwelling tiger became an institution, wandering animals of the same predatory tribe were wont to lurk near the healing springs of Spa. From the days of basset and faro to those of roulette and trente-et-quarante, the pretty little Ardennes village has been the haunt of the feline race. Stately seigneurs, adorned with velvet coats, diamond-hilted swords, and buckles of brilliants, have here been done to death. Fair demoiselles have glided over the promenade resplendent in silks, satins, and jewels of price. The tiger of the period ruffled it in gay attire, wore a watch in each fob, gave splendid entertainments, and made a bank at faro, whereat the fair dames aforesaid thought it no scorn to take a livret. It is delightful to reflect that our dear ancestresses were not stiff or old-fashioned at all, that many a noble lady—tigress in a small way of business—disdained not to set a basset-table for the amusement of her guests, and that Lady Arabella could throw a main with Lord Foppington, upon occasion. The dear creatures were never more pleased than when solacing their ears with the lively rattle of the dice-box. Araminta knew perfectly well the difference between throwing "in" and throwing "out," and Belinda herself would not have incurred the contempt of Fitz-Boodle by her ignorance of what was the nick to seven. It was by no means uncommon for persons of quality to while away the dull hours of the forenoon with the sounding main, and most readers of old comedy will recollect the horror of the country baronet who finds his family engaged in throwing dice on the very breakfast-table of Lady Loverule.

In one of Sir John Vanbrugh's most sparkling comedies we find the following:

Pray, madam, how do you pass your evenings?

Like a woman of spirit, sir, a great spirit. Give me a box and dice. Seven's the main! Oons! sir, I set you a hundred pound! Why, do you think women are married now-a-days to sit at home and mend napkins? Sir, we have nobler ways of passing time.

The idleness of a fashionable watering-place naturally afforded plenty of opportunity for the indulgence of speculative tastes, and ultimately the tiger seized upon such places, entered in, dwelt in them, and has during many years found his account therein, for since the moment when he first discovered the value of mineral waters to the feline constitution it has never been

possible to keep him away from medicinal springs. He is drawn to them by some invincible attraction, and is never so happy, so sleek, and so glossy, as when basking on the sunny slopes of the Taunus, or rolling sportively by the banks of the sparkling Oos. Indeed, during the present century, the German tiger has assumed immense proportions, and whatever his treatment of chance comers to the menagerie, has always kept his claws out of the inhabitants of neighbouring villages.

For a long time he enjoyed himself among the anti-rheumatic baths of Aix-la-Chapelle, but the hunters were upon his track, and ousted the Prussian tiger, who was driven to seek "fresh woods and pastures new" amid the laughing vineyards of the Rhine and the narrow valley of the Lahn. At Wiesbaden, especially, he built himself a magnificent den in a charming country, albeit over-hot in summer, and wondrously infested by wasps. Originally there were three grand entrances to the Kursaal at Wiesbaden, and these provoked from some Frenchman who had lost his money the following epigram:

Il y a trois portes à cet entre,
L'espérance, l'infamie et la mort.
C'est par la première qu'on entre
C'est par les autres qu'on sort.

Let us see the show.

Men, aye, and women, of all nations, stream ceaselessly in and out of these famous entrances, but the demeanour of the comers is very different to that of the goers. A light springy step and a jaunty air often accompany the new arrival burning to see the tiger, perhaps for the first time, or perhaps to renew so agreeable an acquaintance; but a certain listlessness pervades most of those who are leaving the den. They have seen the show. They have crowded up close to the bars. They have—some of them who were rich enough—caused the animal to be stirred up with a long pole, and have suffered accordingly. Young Buffington, son of the great house of Binks and Buffington, looks very sad indeed; the cash which should have taken him to Constantinople, Jerusalem, Cairo, the Pyramids, and the Nile, has been, as Buffington junior mournfully expresses it, "blued." The tiger has gotten the better of B. junior, whose mind will not this season be improved by the advantages of Eastern travel. M. Alcide de Châteaudun is also savage and biting his moustache, savagely curses himself as an "animal" for missing the last run upon the red. Titus J. Danks, Esquire, of Succotash City,

senator from the state of Arizona, takes matters more coolly, and does not seem to labour under more than the weight of care which ordinarily oppresses him. He has "fit" the tiger before now down in Sacramento City, and has played monte when the bankers never dealt without a loaded six-shooter at the side of the pack. This prominent citizen retires pensively to his hotel, where, among the seventeen or so huge Saratoga trunks which form the baggage of himself and wife, lie concealed many bottles of rare old Bourbon, accompanied by Angostura bitters and other "fixings." Fortified by these Homeric stimulants, the senator will return again to the charge, although it is more than doubtful whether an accurate knowledge of all the most recondite mysteries of seven-up, euchre, bluff, draw-poker, and faro will enable him to cope successfully at roulette or trente-et-quarante with the tiger of Wiesbaden.

Near to Frankfort-on-the-Main, and almost under the shadow of that New Jerusalem, a tiger of immense size and dazzling splendour established a show which immediately became popular.

This liberal, open-pawed creature did not wish to devour his clients all at once, preferring rather to consume them piecemeal or by instalments. He advertised largely, and offered unusual advantages to the visitors of his exhibition. At the moment of the arrival of the tiger, Homburg was a trumpery village, inhabited only by some very "ordinary" aborigines, and a few German families of distinction who came to drink from the medicinal springs. But the wild-beast show soon converted the retired village of the Tannus into a pretty town, well paved and lighted with gas; excellent roads were made in all directions; capital hotels and comfortable lodging-houses abounded; the centre of the whole being the magnificent palace of the tiger himself. The visitors to this famous zoological garden were of a very mixed character—mostly bad—but it was always amusing to watch the coolness with which English people threw insular prejudices to the winds, and fell in with the doubtful manners and detestable customs of the place. I have seen English families of the most severe respectability—when at home—become suddenly infected, male and female, with the dominant passion of the spot. They could not let the tiger alone; they even went to the length of beginning to worry him in the morning, when the beast is especially

dangerous; they patted him, they fondled him, they rubbed his silky ears, admired his beautiful paws, and gathering courage from familiarity, boldly pulled his tail. They were his easiest victims. Playing in an off-hand careless way, they hardly ever won anything, and sometimes lost a great deal.

Occasionally, indeed, the tiger met with a foeman worthy of his fangs. I have seen a stern encounter between the tiger and a mighty Russian bear, wherein the tiger was terribly mauled; and only during the past year a Sicilian gentleman proved a tough morsel, and damaged the tiger severely.

But in spite of the beauty and popularity of Homburg, I cannot help thinking Baden-Baden (the chiefest booth of Vanity Fair) the most delightful haunt ever selected by the feline race. Overpowering, indeed, is the natural beauty of the spot, and most delightful the society which has been wont to assemble there. The tiger, too, was not so constantly before the eye as in Homburg, where he filled the entire place, leaving no particle of room for anybody else. It was all tiger at Homburg, whereas at Baden that interesting animal appeared more as an incident than as the final cause of the booth and everything in it.

There was an amusing pretence of taking mineral waters at Baden, but I never met anybody there who had tasted them; and, indeed, found on inquiry that all visitors to Baden were tolerably robust invalids. The feminine element was very strong at the Baden tables, and it was interesting to some students of human nature to watch the fair sex struggling with the tiger. The fair combatants were sometimes happy in their inspirations, but in the long run generally suffered defeat, leaving their rings, their chains, and their jewels on the claws of their terrible opponent. Ancient princesses and antiquated countesses hovered about Ems and Homburg, but none of these old harpies, who had become lean, aged, and haggard in the protracted combat with the tiger, put in an appearance at Baden-Baden.

There everybody lost, and looked pleasant, following the American advice to the loser of a bet to "own up, pay up, and shut up." Sufferers from the tiger's claws did shut up themselves and their boxes, and take the next train, oftentimes second class, for Paris. Not that the monarch of Baden was an inhospitable beast by any means, for when you were stripped to the bone he would kindly supply sufficient funds to

convey your skeleton to the family vault of your ancestors. His reason for this was, of course, plain enough; he did not want his den whitened with the bones of his victims, and so shipped you off on the same principle that gentlemen of the medical profession adopt when they send you to Nice or to Mentone in order to keep your gravestone out of their neighbourhood. But the German tiger is doomed to the fate of his French and English brethren, and the year of grace, 1873, will see the world well rid of him. A reign of blood and iron could not endure the presence of the jungle king, and Bismarck has condemned him to extermination.

The last representative of the European race of tigers continues to drag on a precarious existence in the old pirate stronghold of Monaco, but his days are numbered; neither gods, men, nor the columns of newspapers will much longer endure his existence, and though he will cling with all the strength of fangs and claws to his last Mediterranean retreat, he will soon be disposed of, and the European tiger will become as much a thing of the past as the cave bear, the mammoth, the mastodon, the iguanodon, or any other of those monsters which are now fortunately extinct.

THE CUPBOARD PAPERS.

VII. THE CUPBOARD IN THE HONEYMOON.

On the 15th of August, 1835, Mr. Walker wrote in *The Original*: "The greatest evils, perhaps, under which the lower classes labour, arise from ignorance of domestic economy. It is certainly below the mark to say that, on an average, labourers' families might live much better than they now do, for one-third less expense. Waste and uncomfot are but too often the chief characteristics of their management—the bitter consequences of which are strife, sickness, debt, misery, recklessness, and crime. Their purchases are often bad in quality, small in quantity, and high in price; their meals wasteful and unwholesome; their clothes neglected, and everything about them destitute of arrangement. There are many causes which conspire to keep up this state of things. First, the want of efficient local government, having for its basis moral influence. The majority of mankind are, as it were, out of the pale of systematic discipline, and it is marvellous that their neglected state is not productive of worse consequences to themselves and the rest of the world. Secondly, the means which are adopted to remedy

the evils of neglect, only tend in principle to aggravate and perpetuate them; and the endless institutions, miscalled charitable, with which the land is covered, by furnishing so many substitutes for prudence, diminish the necessity for prudence itself, and, in defiance of morals and religion, reduce human beings below the standard of their nature."

I should like to point out a few of the reasons, which have occurred to me at different times and in various places, why the Swiss, the German, and the French mechanics or labourers are better off than their English brothers; and in the course of the inquiry we shall find that the causes of English hardships and vices were truly stated by Mr. Walker some thirty-seven years ago.

"Monsieur," said my cook to me one morning, "I am going to be married."

"Celestine," I replied, "if your future husband is a saving, sober, even-tempered man, and is in a position to keep you comfortably, I congratulate you; although we shall be sorry to lose you."

"Monsieur is too good," she continued. "But I should not have ventured to intrude on his time, if madame had not authorised me to consult monsieur on a little investment I want to arrange. My money is in Municipals; would monsieur advise me to turn it into Rentes?"

Celestine had been saving steadily for some twelve years; wearing plain white caps and aprons, and the gowns of her class; never indulging in an approach to finery; and all with a view to a comfortable and prudent marriage in the end. Antoine, her betrothed, had, we suspected, an eye upon Celestine's dôt; but this was natural. Antoine would never dream of marrying a woman who could not bring something towards the home, and he himself had waited to his thirtieth year before offering himself as an eligible match. In all such cases money-matters are considered with as much care and foresight as a duke bestows on the settlement of his daughter. My concierge, explaining to me the thrift with which he was compelled to live (his wife was mixing a delicious winter salad in the background while he talked) said, "You see, monsieur, we have to save a dowry for our little girl." A neighbour had two Alsaciennes in his service, who, with a third sister in another place, were all saving their money to buy land and a house in their pays—their pays alas! no longer. A *femme de menage* who came to my establishment, for two francs a day, was in despair when the Mexican

empire collapsed—for she had investments, she told me, weeping bitterly, in the Mexicans. But this is the common story among the working classes in France. The thrift is severe. When Celestine had finished her day's work she knitted stockings. It was with pride she told over the dozen pair of black worsted hose she had for work-days, and an equal number of white for Sundays and fête-days. Her linen was in extraordinary quantities, all spun by her own fingers. Look at the stall-women in the streets; the poissarde gazing seaward for her Ulysses, who will presently come to her arms, fish-scales and all; the gossips at street corners; the women minding little shops—they have flashing knitting-needles in their hands. Did you ever see knitting-needles in the hands of an English poor man's wife? When the stockings are old, can Mrs. Jones knit new feet to them? When her child marries, can she even furnish a poor home for her flesh and blood? Has she the command of a few weeks' wages in advance; and can she, out of this hoard, buy at a favourable moment in the cheapest market? Compare Celestine with Mary Anne, and you will soon come at the reason why the English working-folk lapse into pauperism, directly their wage ceases. Domestic economy forsooth! A domestic scramble at the best is the English house-keeping, when compared with the thrift and order of most of the continental societies; and it is hardly possible to say that matters have mended in one particular since Mr. Walker wrote *The Original*.

Consider that the following was written in 1835, and that we are still somewhere very near where we were then. "Good training is alone education, and it is not enough to teach only those things which are good or bad, as they are used. A woman does not necessarily make a better helpmate to a labouring man because she can read and write; but it is otherwise if she has been taught the domestic arts of life suitable to her condition. Both are desirable, but the latter are indispensable to happiness, and they are lamentably neglected. . . . There is no class of persons to whom domestic comfort is of so much importance, as to those who have to earn their livelihood by hard labour, and there is no greater contrast than that between a well-ordered and a cheerless home. In the one case, when the husband returns from his work he finds a kindly woman, a cheerful fire, quiet children, as good a meal as his means will allow ready prepared, every want anticipated, every habit attended to, an universal

neatness, and everything in its place." The picture is a pretty one for a "goody." It is not a common scene in England, however, albeit many years have passed since the preacher lifted his voice. But the value of it may be tested by any member of a School Board who will be at the pains of travelling through the villages of Belgium, Switzerland, France, and Germany. He will find his best examples in France, however; since here, combined with an innate love of domestic order, there is more taste than in Germany, or Switzerland. Out of a given wage earned by the husband, the wife can offer a better table, and a more pleasing arrangement of the home rooms. She has had exactly the domestic education which Mr. Walker very properly puts before reading and writing. My Celestine, to take an instance, could neither read nor write; yet she could make her market with the keenest of her profession; was mistress of all the arts of thrift, and could even invest her savings with discernment.

To many of us there is something shocking in the business-like airs with which French people contract alliances; but, among the poorer population, at any rate, the calculation, foresight, deliberate preparation of a home, and arrangement of the means of supporting it, mean life-long comfort, each of the contracting parties having a due regulated share of the duties to perform. The only bit of extravagance is the wedding dinner, followed by a ball. In a couple of days the duties of life are taken up, and the wife is busy with her linen and her saucepans. Mr. Walker describes marriage among English farm labourers: "Women, brought up in ignorance of comfort, of course are careless about the means of providing for it. They are heedless how they marry, and, when married, never think of the duties of their situation. I recollect a young woman, the wife of a labourer in the country, once applying to me respecting some alleged harsh treatment on the part of a shopkeeper, to whom she owed money. On investigating the case, I found that she regularly spent three shillings a week in sweet things, and that she held herself entitled to pass the first year after her marriage in complete idleness, a privilege, I discovered, by no means seldom claimed. Of course, the habits of the first year would become, in a great measure, the habits of after life, and the indulgence in sweet things would most likely be transferred in time to things less harmless."

When Celestine married her Antoine, who was a railway porter, she begged that she might return to my service for the few months she had to remain in Paris, before leaving for Italy, where her bridegroom had effected an excellent engagement that would keep the pair in comfort. She pleaded that in this way she would not have to draw on her resources, all of which would be wanted for her installation in her new home. She was very proud, at the same time, to beg that my family would taste the wine of her husband's village, grown on the bit of land belonging to his family, in which he had a share. So the Paris railway porter was an infinitely small wine grower in his native place; and the desire of his life was to earn money in "the capital of the world" to carry back to the little property. In marriage he looked for a wife who would husband his resources, and, at the same time, add to them. I leave others to moralise and sentimentalise on the subject, I give the facts as they come under my eyes, and if I dwell upon them, it is because they appear to me to be very near the foundation of the difference there is between the domestic and social predicaments of the wage-earning classes of England and France. Celestine could turn every liard of the family income to the best account; could make a thoroughly good dinner out of the slightest and cheapest materials, could knit her husband's hose, and spin the flax for his linen while the pot-au-feu was bubbling within ear-shot; and having cultivated the habit of saving all her life, and being among saving people, could invest intelligently. Let the reader not run away with the idea that my old cook and the railway porter will ever become rich people. They are thinking only of their old days, and of a crust of bread to leave to their children. They will never move out of the class in which they were born. But the comforts of their degree they will command when they are old. They will grow their own wine and vegetables, rear their own pork and poultry, keep their own cow, and be able to give a *vin d'honneur* any day to the friend who may pass their way. And Celestine's is the every-day marriage of the French working classes.

Mr. Walker, whom I take to be the fairest exponent we have yet had of the weak places in the condition of the English agricultural labourer, and, indeed, of all English workers, says: "I will conclude my observations with enumerating a few particulars which appear to me to be most worthy of atten-

tion, and others will no doubt occur to those who turn their minds to the subject. In my intercourse with the labouring classes, what I have observed they seem most to want to learn, is to market and make purchases on the most advantageous terms; to apply the arts of cookery to preparing food in an economical, wholesome, and palatable manner; in the country to brew and bake; to light a fire expeditiously and economically; to keep up a fire economically; to make a fire cheerful expeditiously; to set out a table quickly and neatly; to clear away expeditiously; to cut out, make, and mend linen, and to keep other clothes in good order; to wash and get up linen; to dry and clean shoes; to sweep and clean rooms quietly and expeditiously, and to keep them neat and comfortable; and, lastly, to prepare proper food for children and the sick. The difference in the way of doing these things, as far as my observation could go, is immense; and the difference in point of comfort corresponding."

The picture of the rearing of a family in the English agricultural districts which follows—its sad beginning and hopeless end—is but a companion canvas to that which has been drawn of late by special peripatetic philosophers of the daily papers. Mary Anne is very like her grandmother; the same ignorant, sad-hearted, helpless, slatternly creature, with not a thought beyond weak tea, green bacon, greens, with vinegar, by way of sauce, a bit of beef on holidays, and small beer. I sent some Australian meat to some cottages near my "little place in Surrey," having heard that the husband, a waggoner, had broken his leg, and that there was not, as usual, a penny in hand. A few days later, Petit Bec heard (he hears everything) that they had put the meat in the pig-tub, and had schemed a bit of beef at the butcher's. The wife could do nothing with the wholesome Australian mutton, but sat helpless in the cottage, with not a single resource at her command. She and her good man had married without troubling themselves about the future. The cupboard, within the circling of the honeymoon, was as bare as it was when the accident befel the husband, and there were four children whimpering before its empty shelves.

The fundamental difference between the lot of Celestine and her railway guard, and Mary Anne and her good man, as they start together, is that between a providence that has become second nature, and an improvidence that is not shocking or fearful to

the couple because it is everywhere the rule. Mary Anne's children will probably grow up as shiftless and improvident as she is. Celestine will begin to shape the course of her children directly she lifts them for the last time from the go-cart. They will never be dressed in tawdry finery, imitating their betters. Little Celestine will wear a little white cap and cotton frocks, and very thick shoes, and will be clean always; but she will never be tricked out in imitation of the children of fortune, who skip and play hide-and-seek in the Infants' Alley of the Tuileries gardens. A marriage portion will grow with her growth. Her brother will have his life parcelled out for him, will be apprenticed, and watched over through his dangerous years; and, when mother and father die, brother and sister will inherit, not fortunes that will enable them to live thenceforth in idleness, but goods and chattels, and money, and a little land, that will lighten their life with hope, and strength, and comfort while they work, and keep them independent, and of tranquil mind, should they fall sick.

THE YELLOW FLAG.

By EDMUND YATES,

AUTHOR OF "BLACK SHEEP," "NOBODY'S FORTUNE," &c. &c.

BOOK III.

CHAPTER VIII. HAGAR'S VISIT.

In the house in Great Walpole-street there was little change. Things went on in pretty much the same manner as when John Calverley had been in the habit of creeping back to his dismal home with sorrow in his heart, or when Pauline sat watching and plotting in the solitude of her chamber. Since her second husband's death, Mrs. Calverley seemed to have eschewed even the small amount of society which she had previously kept; the heavy dinner-parties were given up, and the only signs of so-called social intercourse were the fortnightly meetings of a Dorcas club, which was held under Mrs. Calverley's auspices, and at which several elderly ladies of the neighbourhood discussed tea and scandal under the pretence of administering to the necessities of the poor. At other times, the mistress of the house led a life which was eminently solitary and self-contained. She read occasionally, it is true; but when she called at the circulating library, she brought away with her, for her amusement or edification, no story in which, under the guise of fiction, the writer had endeavoured to portray any of

the varieties of shifting human nature which had come beneath his ken; no poem glowing with passion and ardour, or sweetly musical with melodious numbers. Hard, strong books of travel through districts with immense unpronounceable names; tales of missionary enterprise set forth in the coldest, baldest, and least-educated style; polemical discussions on religious questions, and priestly biographies; lives of small men, containing no proper precept, setting no worthy example—these were Mrs. Calverley's favourite reading. The butler declared that she read nothing at all; that, though these books were brought home on the back seat of the carriage, and were afterwards displayed on the drawing-room table, one at a time occupying the post of honour on his mistress's lap, she never so much as glanced at them, but sat staring with her steely blue eyes straight in front of her; a state of things which afflicted the butler, on his own statement, with a disease known to him as "the creeps," and which was considered generally so uncanny throughout the lower regions, that had not the wages been good and the table liberal, the whole household would have departed in a body.

About four o'clock on a dull afternoon in the very early spring, Mrs. Calverley was seated in her drawing-room in that semi-comatose state which inspired her domestics with so much terror. Some excuse, however, was to be made for her not attempting, on the present occasion, to read the book which lay idly in her lap, the time being "between the lights," as the phrase goes, when the gathering gloom of evening, aided by the ever-present thick-ness of the London atmosphere, blots out the sun's departing rays before the time recorded in the almanack. It was very seldom, indeed, that Mrs. Calverley suffered her thoughts to dwell upon any incident of her immediately passed life. On what had happened during her girlhood, when she was a spoiled and petted heiress, on certain episodes in the career of jolly George Gurwood, her first husband, in which she had borne a conspicuous part, she was in the habit of bestowing occasional remembrance; but all that concerned her later life she wilfully and deliberately shut out from her mind. It chanced, however, that, upon this particular day, the deceased John Calverley had been frequently present to his widow's recollection. There was nothing extraordinary in this; it arose from the fact that that very morning, in looking through the contents of

an old trunk which had long since been consigned to the lumber-room, Mrs. Calverley had come upon an old fly-blown water-colour drawing of a youth with a falling linen collar, a round jacket, and white-duck trousers, a drawing which bore some faint general resemblance to John even as she remembered him. Pondering over this work of art in a dreamy fashion, Mrs. Calverley found herself wondering whether her late husband's mental condition in youth had been as frank and ingenuous as that to be gathered from his physical portrait; and, secondly, whether she had not either faultily misapprehended or wilfully misconstrued that mental and moral condition even during the time that she had been acquainted with him. Two or three times later in the day her mind had wandered to the same topic, and now, as she sat in the dull drawing-room in the failing light, her thoughts were full of him. It was pleasant, she remembered, though she had not thought so at the time, to be looking forward in expectation of his return home at a certain hour; pleasant to know that he would probably be detained beyond the appointed time, thereby giving her opportunity for complaint; pleasant to have some one to vent her annoyance upon who would feel it so keenly, and reply to it so little. She had not hitherto looked at her loss from this point of view, and she was much struck by the novelty of it; though she had never had any opinion of Mr. Calverley, she was willing to admit that he was not absolutely bad-hearted; nay, there were times when—

Her reverie was interrupted by the entrance of the butler, who announced that a young lady was below desiring to speak to Mrs. Calverley.

"A lady! What kind of a lady?"

"A—a widow, mum," replied the butler, pointing in an imbecile way, first at Mrs. Calverley's cap, and then at his own head.

"Ah," said Mrs. Calverley, with a deep groan, and shaking her head to and fro—for she never missed an opportunity of making capital out of her condition before the servants—"one who has known grief, eh, James? And she wants to see me?"

"Asked first if you lived here, mum, and then was very particular in wishing to see you. A pleasant-spoken young woman, mum, and not like any begging-letter impostor, or cove—or people I mean—of that sort."

"You can light the gas, James, and then show the lady up. No, stay; show her up at once, and do not light the gas until I ring."

Since she had known Madame Du Tertre, Mrs. Calverley had taken some interest in her own personal appearance, and not having seen her toilet-glass since the morning, she had an idea that she might have become somewhat dishevelled.

The butler left the room, and presently returned, ushering in a lady who, so far as Mrs. Calverley could make out in the uncertain light, was young, of middle height, and dressed in deep mourning.

The mistress of the mansion motioned her visitor to a seat, and making her a stiff bow, said, "You wish to speak to me, I believe?"

"I wish to speak with Mrs. Calverley."

"I am Mrs. Calverley. What is your business?"

"Your—your husband died recently?"

"About six months ago. How very curious! What is your object in asking these questions?"

"Bear with me, pray! Do not think me odd; only answer me what I ask you; my reasons for wishing you to do so are so urgent."

The lady's voice was agitated, her manner eager and unusual. Mrs. Calverley did not quite know what to make of her visitor. She might be a maniac; but then why was she interested in the deceased Mr. Calverley? Another explanation of that mystery arose in Mrs. Calverley's mind. Who was this hussy who was so inquisitive about other women's husbands? She should like to see what the bold-faced thing looked like. And she promptly rang the bell to summon James to light the gas.

"You will answer me, will you not?" said the pleasing voice.

"It depends upon what you ask," replied Mrs. Calverley, with a smile.

"Tell me, then—Mr. Calverley—your husband—was he very fond of you?"

The few scattered bristles which did duty as Mrs. Calverley's eyebrows rose half an inch nearer her forehead with astonishment.

"Yes," she replied, after a moment's reflection, "of course he was—devoted."

Something like a groan escaped from the stranger.

"And you—you loved him?"

"Very much in the same way," said Mrs. Calverley, feeling herself for the first time in her life imbued with a certain grim humour—"quite devoted to him."

"Yes," said the visitor, sadly, "that I can fully understand. Did you ever see or hear of his partner, Mr. Claxton?"

"I never saw him," said Mrs. Calverley. "I've heard of him often enough, oftener

than I like. It was he that persuaded Mr. Calverley to going into that speculation about those ironworks which Mr. Jeffreys can make nothing of. But he wasn't a partner in the house; there are no partners in the house—only some one that Mr. Calverley knew in the City, and probably a designing swindler, for Mr. Calverley was a weak man, and this Claxton——”

“Mr. Claxton was the best man that ever walked this earth!” cried Alice, breaking forth, “the kindest, the dearest, and the best.”

“Heyday,” cried Mrs. Calverley, with a snort of defiance. “And who may you be, who know so much about Mr. Claxton, and who want to know so much about Mr. Calverley?”

“That is right, James,” she added, “light the gas, and then,” she said, in a lower tone, “I shall be better able to judge the kind of visitor I have.”

The gas was lighted and the servant left the room; Mrs. Calverley rose stiffly from her chair and advanced towards Alice, who remained seated.

“What is this,” she said, in a strong voice, “and who are you, coming here tricked out in these weeds to make inquiries, and to utter sentiments at which modest women would blush? Who are you, I say?”

But while Mrs. Calverley had been speaking Alice had looked up, and her eyes had fallen upon a picture hanging against the wall. A big crayon head of John, her own old John, just as she had known him, with the large bright eyes, the heavy, thoughtful brow, and the lines round the mouth somewhat deeply graven. For an instant she bent her head before the picture, the next, with the tears welling up into her eyes, and in a low soft voice, without the slightest exaggeration in tone or manner, she said: “You ask me who I am, and I will tell you!” Then pointing up to the portrait, “I am that man’s widow!”

“What!” screamed Mrs. Calverley. “Do you know who that was?”

“No,” said Alice, “except that he was my husband.”

“Why, woman!” exclaimed the outraged mistress of the house, in a torrent of rage, “that was Mr. Calverley!”

“I know nothing,” said Alice, “save that in the sight of Heaven, he was my husband. Call him by what name you will, he had neither lot nor part with you. You tell me that he loved you, was devoted to you—it is a lie! You talk of your love for him, and that may be indeed, for he was meant to be loved! But he was mine, all mine—ah,

my dear John! ah, my darling old John!” She broke down utterly here, and fell on her knees before the picture in a flood of tears.

“Well, upon my word,” cried Mrs. Calverley, “this is a little too much! No one who knew Mr. Calverley, selfish and neglectful as he was, and without the least consideration for me, would suspect him to have been such a Bluebeard or a Mormon as you endeavour to make him out! How dare you come here with a tale like this! How dare you present yourself before me with your brazen face and your well-prepared story, unless it is, as I suppose, to induce me to give you hush-money to stop your mouth! Do you imagine for an instant that I am to be taken in by such a ridiculous plot? Do you imagine for an instant that——”

She stopped, for there was a sound of voices outside, and the next moment the door opened and Martin Gurwood, closely followed by Humphrey Statham, entered the room.

Mrs. Calverley dropped the arm which she had extended in monition, and Alice ran to place herself by Martin Gurwood’s side.

“Save me from her!” she cried, shrinking on his arm. “Save me from this woman!”

“Do not be afraid, Alice,” said Martin, endeavouring to calm her. “We thought to find you here, but hoped to be in time to prevent your suffering any annoyance. Mother,” he added turning to Mrs. Calverley, “there is some mistake here.”

“There must be some mistake, indeed,” observed Mrs. Calverley, with great asperity, “when I find my son, a clergyman of the Church of England, taking part against his mother with a woman who, take the most charitable view of it, is only fitted for Colney Hatch Lunatic Asylum.”

“Not to take part against you, mother! Surely——”

“Well, I don’t know what you call it,” cried Mrs. Calverley, “or whether you consider it quite decorous to keep your arm round that young person before your mother’s face! Or whether”—here the worthy lady gave a short nod towards Statham—“gentlemen with whom I have but slight personal acquaintance think themselves justified in coming into my house uninvited! I am an old-fashioned person, and I dare say don’t understand these matters, but in my time they would not have been tolerated.”

“See, dear mother,” said Martin, quietly, “you do us all, and more especially this lady, great injustice!”

"Oh, very likely," said Mrs. Calverley, sarcastically; "very likely she is right and I am wrong! She has just told me that she was Mr. Calverley's wife, and no doubt you will hear out that that is correct, and that I have been dreaming for the last twelve years."

"If you will permit me to speak, madam," said Humphrey Statham in his deep tones, "I think I can prove to you that this lady has, or imagined she has, grounds for the statement which she has made, and that while you have been deeply injured, her injuries are worse, and more serious than yours."

"You will hear Mr. Statham, if you please, mother," said Martin Gurwood; "I am here to attest the truth of all that he will say."

And then, with homely natural eloquence springing from the depth of his feeling, Humphrey Statham told, in nervous, unadorned language, the story of the betrayal of the woman whom he loved. On the dead man's perfidy he dwelt as lightly as he could, more lightly still on the probable causes which had induced the dead man to waver in his faith, and to desert the home which had been rendered so unattractive to him; but he spoke earnestly and manfully of the irremediable wrong done to Alice, and of the manner in which her life had been sacrificed; and, finally, he produced the document in John Calverley's handwriting, which had just been discovered, to show how completely she had been made the victim of a fraud.

Sitting bolt upright on her chair, and slowly rubbing her withered hands one over the other, Mrs. Calverley listened to Statham's speech. When he stopped she bridled up and said with asperity, "A very pretty story indeed; very well concocted and arranged between you all. Of course, I may believe as much of it as I choose! There's no law, I imagine, to compel me to swallow it whole, even though my son, a clergyman of the Church of England, sits by and nods his head in confirmation of his friend. And don't imagine, please, that I am at all surprised at what I hear about Mr. Calverley! I hear it now for the first time, but I always imagined him to be a bad and wicked man, given up to selfishness and debauchery, and quite without the power of appreciating the blessings of a well-ordered home. The young woman needn't start! I am not

going to demean myself by engaging in any controversy with her, and wish rather to ignore her presence. But I will say," said Mrs. Calverley, drawing herself up, "but I will say that I had not expected to find that my son was sanctioning these proceedings, and conniving at the disgrace which was being heaped upon me!"

"Mother!" cried Martin Gurwood, appealingly.

"It might," continued Mrs. Calverley, with great placidity, "it might have been imagined that, as my son, and leaving out all question of his clerical position, he would have adopted another course, but such do not appear to have been his views. Let me tell him," she cried, turning upon Martin with sudden fierceness, "that henceforward he is no son of mine! That I renounce him and leave him to shift for himself; he has no longer any expectations from me! On certain conditions I promised to share all with him now, and leave him my sole heir at my death. But I revoke what I said; I am mistress of my own fortune, and will continue to be so. Not one penny of it shall go to him."

"You are of course at liberty to do what you like with your fortune, mother," said Martin, quietly, "and it would never occur to me for an instant——"

"Stay!" interrupted Statham, taking his friend by the arm and pointing to Alice, "there is no use in prolonging this painful discussion, and Mrs. Claxton is completely exhausted."

"You are right," said Martin, rising from his seat; "we have been somewhat thoughtless in thus overtaxing her strength, and will take her home at once!" Then advancing, he said, in a low tone, "Mother, will you see me to-morrow?"

"Mr. Martin Gurwood," said Mrs. Calverley, in a clear, cold voice, "with my own free will I will never look upon you again! And though the name that I bear is that of one who was a scoundrel, I am glad that it is not the name which is disgraced by you!"

And thus those two parted.

Early in December will be published the

**EXTRA DOUBLE NUMBER
FOR CHRISTMAS,**

1872.

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